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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 001458

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EUN](#) [BL](#) [VE](#)  
SUBJECT: EU URGES RESTRAINED RESPONSE TO CHAVEZ, SUPPORTS  
DIALOGUE IN BOLIVIA

REF: STATE 99473

Classified By: USEU POLMC Chris Davis for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: EU Council Secretariat and French Presidency interlocutors were supportive, though not always optimistic, about efforts to resolve the Bolivian crisis through dialogue. On September 19, the French Presidency issued a statement that, among other things, encouraged La Paz to "maintain constructive diplomatic relations with all its partners." Council interlocutor Nicolas Pascual de la Parte encouraged the United States to avoid strong public pronouncements against President Chavez, so as not to give him further ammunition. End Summary

¶2. (C) Drawing on reftel points, PolOff on September 18 discussed the charges leveled at our Ambassadors in Venezuela and Bolivia with Nicolas Pascual de la Parte, head of the UN and Latin America task force at the EU Council Secretariat. Pascual de la Parte said the U.S.'s reciprocal action against the Bolivian and Venezuelan Ambassadors in Washington was understandable, but also urged restraint in responding to Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's provocations. Chavez is confronting domestic political challenges and his influence in the region has diminished over the past two to three years, Pascual de la Parte contended. To distract from his own problems, he tries to capitalize on any regional crises to draw out the United States. Acknowledging his antics with a strong public response would only allow him to portray himself as a regional leader that the U.S. must reckon with. The situation in Bolivia is a true crisis, and one that is internal to Bolivia, he said. Allowing Chavez to make it into a regional issue where he is the central player not only strengthens him, but it distracts from the real problems in Bolivia, Pascual de la Parte contended.

¶3. (C) Speaking the following day, Pascual de la Parte said he was rather pessimistic about the prospects for fruitful dialogue among the parties in Bolivia. Opining that Morales is a "nice guy" who wants to improve the lot of Bolivia's poor, Pascual de la Parte said Morales does not know how to proceed democratically. Instead, he is trying to "rewrite history" and draft a new constitution quickly with the support of only just over half of the population as a substitute for truly engaging in discussions. The U.S. and EU, he said, should press for moderation and "meaningful" dialogue. The EU had offered to facilitate that dialogue, he said, but UNASUR appeared to be leading the way.

¶4. (SBU) Counselor for Latin American issues at the French delegation Valerie Liang-Champrenault on September 19 also took reftel points on board and welcomed the U.S. approach. Liang-Champrenault alerted post to the French Presidency's statement, released the same day, on the Bolivian crisis. The statement supports UNASUR's declaration, welcomes the agreement to open a national dialogue, and offers to support that dialogue alongside other national and international actors. In an apparent reference to Bolivia's action against

the U.S. Ambassador, the staement also expresses hope that "Bolivia may mintain constructive diplomatic relations with all its partners."

[15](#). (C) Comment: The September 25 troika in Washington will provide another opportunity to reinforce our points, and post will continue to reach out to Member States in Brussels.

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